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To: Katie Pickens
Subject: Solar Energy

Yes, we should develop solar energy--but not at the expense of everything else. One of Vermont's most important resources--both from an aesthetic and economic point of view, is its landscape and scenery. Tourists come to Vermont not to see rows upon rows of solar panels, but to see mountains, forests, fields and beautiful green vistas. Yet NO REGARD is being paid to the landscape when solar farms are erected.

Solar farms should be adequately screened from view. Right now, there is little to no mitigation of the effects of solar panels on the environment. Much more could be done to plant trees and bushes around solar installations, but the developers refuse to spend the dollars needed to do that. Adequate mitigation measures should be mandatory in all projects, with all mitigation measures and place, and evaluated for their adequacy, before construction can begin on the solar installation.

I look out my window right now, and the solar installation next door is in plain view. Trees were supposed to be planted, yet NONE were. The installation was rushed to construction in the early winter. (Odd that it wasn't too cold to construct the panels, but too cold to plant trees . . .) I assume the trees will be planted at some time when the weather gets warm, but when? Will they ever be planted, or will that requirement be skirted? And what will it all look like when the trees are planted? Will they be adequate to hide the installation? Guess we won't know until they're planted. Unfortunately, that may be too late.

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